



CERTIFICATE of RECOGNITION

By virtue of the authority vested by the Constitution in the Governor of the Commonwealth of Virginia, there is hereby officially recognized:

AUTISM AWARENESS MONTH

WHEREAS, the health and safety of all Virginians is important to the happiness, prosperity and well-being of our Commonwealth's families and communities; and

WHEREAS, autism spectrum disorders are a form of developmental disability that usually manifest before the age of three and affect social interactions, communication and behavior; and

WHEREAS, autism spectrum disorders occur in all racial, ethnic and socioeconomic groups; and

WHEREAS, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention estimates that on average, children in the United States have an autism spectrum disorder as often as 1 in 110, and in 2011, the Virginia Department of Education identified 11,703 children between the ages of 3 and 21 as having an autism spectrum disorder; and

WHEREAS, the prevalence of individuals diagnosed with autism spectrum disorders now surpasses that of childhood cancer, juvenile diabetes and Down syndrome combined, and is continuing to increase by a startling 10 – 17 percent every year according to estimates from the U.S. Department of Health; and

WHEREAS, early intervention significantly improves outcomes for children with autism so that they have more productive and independent lives; and

WHEREAS, it is fitting to raise awareness of the global health crisis of autism, stress the importance of early diagnosis and early intervention, and to celebrate the unique talents and qualities of individuals with autism;

NOW, THEREFORE, I, Robert F. McDonnell, do hereby recognize April 2012 as **AUTISM AWARENESS MONTH** in our **COMMONWEALTH OF VIRGINIA**, and I call this observance to the attention of our citizens.




Governor


Secretary of the Commonwealth